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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0596
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
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RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 3627
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1445
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1312
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 1881
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2408
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 000468

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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STATE FOR SCA/CEN, EUR/ACE
AID/W FOR EE/AA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [SOCI](#) [TX](#)
SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: AMCIT GROUP FREELANCES ASSISTANCE

REF: A. ASHGABAT 0373
[1](#)B. ASHGABAT 0355

[1](#)1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Members of the AmCit group, Friends of the Turkmen, were recently in Turkmenistan to meet with Turkmen officials and offer assistance (Ref. A). The group met with officials at the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Health, Economy and Development, Education, Sports and Tourism, and Culture and Broadcasting. While the group is willing to identify experts in various fields to provide assistance, they lack funding. The group's leader told EmbOff that they hoped to get the Government of Turkmenistan to agree to fund, at least partially, some of the proposed projects.

SPECIFIC ASSISTANCE REQUESTS

[1](#)3. (SBU) The leader said they were well-received at all the ministries, many of which asked for assistance in specific areas. For example, the Ministry of Economy and Development identified micro-business/microcredit, export to the United States, encouraging greater U.S. investment in Turkmenistan, and transportation development as areas for further cooperation. The Ministry of Culture and Broadcasting wanted further training in television broadcasting (NOTE: A U.S. expert recruited by our Public Affairs Section recently visited Turkmenistan to provide technical-assistance training for TV news. Ref. B). The Ministry of Health asked the group for training in emergency and preventive medicine. The group this trip included a physician, who is a specialist in emergency medicine. He gave a lecture to 100 doctors and 200 medical students on this topic. He plans to come back to give additional lectures.

TROUBLE ON THE ICE

[1](#)4. (SBU) A skating coach, who was in the group, met separately with hockey players as well as ice skating students, who were trying to learn ice dancing. According to the group's leader, Turkmenistan has no ice skating coaches.

The students have tried to learn by watching videos and training with gymnasts. The assessment of the U.S. coach was that the young people had learned moves incorrectly. Nevertheless, they have been able to progress from skating backwards, which was the only thing they could do last fall when the group last visited, to now doing some spins. Despite the great tradition of hockey teams in the former Soviet Union, the group claimed that Turkmen players also needed assistance with that sport. Until recently, the country had only separate ethnic Russian and Turkmen teams, and the Turkmen teams were not very good. Now, there are some combined teams, and quality has improved somewhat.

15. (SBU) COMMENT: While it is admirable that this private group wants to offer assistance, they should not pin any hopes on the government ponying up money for these projects. It's not going to happen. Moreover, the Friends of the Turkmen should probably shy away from projects that are way over their head like transportation development. Their forte is most likely in areas that are low-cost and emphasize people-to-people contact such as sports coaches and guest lecturers. END COMMENT.
HOAGLAND